

No Health Threat in LA County: Addressing Families' Concerns about Radiation from Japan

1. What is radiation and how do you get exposed to it?

Radiation is a form of energy that's around us at all times. We're exposed to small amounts of radiation every day, from naturally occurring sources (like elements in soil) and man-made sources (like medical x-rays). Radiation can also come from radiological accidents, like the one happening in Japan.

2. Will radiation from Japan affect LA County?

The radiation from Japan poses no health threat to children in LA County. Radiation from Japan is weakened because of the thousands of miles between Japan and California. There is no indication that radiation will reach harmful levels in LA County's air, food, or water.

The Department of Public Health, together with other local, state and federal agencies, will continue to monitor and analyze levels of radiation in Los Angeles County.

3. Should people take Potassium Iodide (KI)?

No. There are no signs that radioactive material, including radioactive iodine, will reach harmful levels in LA or neighboring counties. There is no need for or benefit to taking KI. Taking KI unnecessarily can cause harmful side effects or allergic reactions. Only public health officials and your doctor can safely determine whether you should take KI.

4. What can schools do right now?

Recommendations for staff:

- Maintain children's usual routines for eating, sleeping and exercising.
- Give children space and opportunity to express their feelings.
- Be familiar with the organization's disaster and communication plans.
- Build or refresh emergency kits for the home, work, and car.

Recommendations for parents:

- Provide current emergency contact information.
- Involve children in putting together emergency kits and developing a family communication plan. For more information, visit <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eprp/media/index.htm>.
- Teach children how to use the family communication plan and the items included in the emergency kits.
- Talk things out with family and friends for comfort and reassurance.
- Offer support to reputable charities that are assisting Japan.
- Identify and build relationships with neighbors, community organizations (like neighborhood groups and volunteer agencies) and faith-based groups (like churches, synagogues, and temples) in their area.



Important Facts

1. There are no harmful radiation levels in LA County.
2. LA County's food, water, and air are safe.
3. You should NOT buy or take potassium iodide (KI) or other products to reduce risk from radiation exposure. It is not necessary and may be harmful.

Where can families go for more information?

CA Dept. of Public Health

(916) 341-3947

Available 8 am to 5 pm,
Spanish and English

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

(800) CDC-INFO

(800) 232-4636, available 24/7

Food and Drug Administration

<http://www.fda.gov>